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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 558
By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Vanderbilt University
upon the establishment of the new science
communications program.

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the members of this General Assembly should honor those exemplary academic institutions that have made significant contributions to their respective fields; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University is one such remarkable educational institution that is most assuredly deserving of special recognition; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University is an outstanding higher education institution that is known across the nation for its dedication and pursuit of excellence in all aspects of education; and

WHEREAS, in a pioneering effort to bridge the large communication gap between scientists and the general population, Vanderbilt University has developed a curriculum that combines the field of communication with the fields of science, engineering and technology; and

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WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University astutely observed the need for the public to have a basic understanding of scientific terms, concepts and processes to make, informed decisions, particularly health care decisions, on issues that confront them each day; and

WHEREAS, spearheaded by Dr. Rick Chappell, Vanderbilt's science communications program seeks to build and form the necessary skills to provide the crucial link between science and technology and the public; and

WHEREAS, personal decisions, such as medical treatment and smoking and eating habits, and community decisions, especially environmental decisions involving the location of waste disposal sites and nuclear power plants, should be made on an understanding of the principles and facts involved, not on emotional hype and hysteria; and

WHEREAS, through their studies, students of the communication of science, engineering and technology interdisciplinary major will obtain a solid understanding of the science process and achieve an ability to communicate the complexity of science so that the general population will understand the most important concepts of the scientific world; and

WHEREAS, because of the high level of public interest in scientific research, specifically medical science, this new field of study is one of the fastest growing in today's world; and

WHEREAS, despite the newness of its program, Vanderbilt University has already established itself as a quality educator in science communication and is able to offer its students the opportunity to specialize in a variety of different aspects of the field, in addition to providing coveted internships at a number of estimable organizations, including NASA, the Discovery Channel, National Institute of Health, CNN and the American Chemical Society; and

WHEREAS, graduates of the program will be equipped to make significant contributions in the medically-related fields of public health, public relations for medical research hospitals and companies, pharmaceutical sales, medical technology-related companies, medical law and medical legislation and will serve as a liaison between the scientific world and the non-scientific world; and

WHEREAS, Vanderbilt University also offers a scholarship program for high school students who are interested in studying science communication at Vanderbilt; and

WHEREAS, "The Chroniclers of Discovery Scholarship Program" is a nationwide contest sponsored by Vanderbilt University, along with NASA, Discovery Communications and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center; the program awards scholarships based on students' creation of a story that reports on a scientific or technological discovery; and

WHEREAS, the scholarship consists of two levels, a 9th-10th grade level and a 12th grade level; winners of the 9th-10th grade scholarships have the opportunity to attend a special Advanced Space Academy featuring science communications at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, A full tuition scholarship to Vanderbilt University is awarded to the 12th grade level winner. Funded by NASA, the scholarship is given through NASA's Tennessee Space Grant Consortium and includes a summer internship at the Discovery Channel; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that the members of this legislative body should pause in their deliberations to specially honor this exceptional institution of higher learning and its exciting new academic program; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend the administration, faculty and staff of Vanderbilt University upon the establishment of the new science communications interdisciplinary major, applaud them for their efforts in keeping pace with the ever-changing world and wish them much success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.